

Washington Roundup

Somali Missiles

Senate delegation from the Armed Services and Appropriations committees, accompanied by staff technical experts, will visit the Somali Democratic Republic to ascertain whether construction of a USSR missile base is under way at Berbera, a port jutting into the Gulf of Aden near the entrance to the Red Sea. The invitation of Somali Ambassador Abdullahi Ahmed Addou was accepted after the committees were guaranteed free access for an inspection. The trip is set tentatively for July 2-7. Presentations by Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger, backed by reconnaissance photographs (AW&ST June 16, p. 19), that there is a major Soviet base building at Berbera were characterized by Addou as "unfounded and of pure fabrication." Somalia is only aiming to develop Berbera into a major free international seaport, with airport facilities, he said, adding that the U. S. Navy has accepted an invitation to send its ships there soon for a visit. **But the ambassador declined to state whether Somalia, in its own right, has stored missiles.**

Sen. John C. Culver (D.-Iowa), a member of the Armed Services Committee, said in a speech to the Senate: "The Soviet missiles said to be in Berbera are the old Styx type. . . . This antiship missile became operational over 15 years ago, has a limited range of only about 20 naut. mi. and carries only non-nuclear warheads. Even if a few have been sent to Berbera, they cannot be used until put aboard missile patrol boats." Behind the Pentagon-Somalia clash is the **coming Senate showdown vote on whether the U. S. should develop a major naval and air installation on the island of Diego Garcia, south of the tip of India.** The main argument of proponents is that the Soviet buildup in the Indian Ocean area dictates a U. S. naval presence there.

Criminal Check

Documents and testimony obtained by the Senate Judiciary subcommittee on administrative practice and procedure concerning the Civil Aeronautics Board's abbreviated investigation of illegal airline political contributions (AW&ST Mar. 31, p. 26) **have been turned over to the Justice Dept. "to see whether criminal prosecution is warranted,"** according to the subcommittee's draft report. The draft, being circulated for comment and not yet an official subcommittee report, states that the Mar. 21 hearings reveal **"a strong likelihood of highly improper and possibly criminal behavior on the part of Board members themselves."** Directly conflicting testimony from then CAB acting Chairman Richard J. O'Melia and former CAB Chairman Robert D. Timm requires additional investigation by Justice Dept., the draft said.

No Disclosure

Supreme Court ruled 7-2 last week that the Federal Aviation Administration need not release its analyses of airline operations and maintenance. The Freedom of Information Act, the court said, did not repeal the section of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 that allows the FAA administrator to withhold from the public information

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